

**Minnesota Forest Resources Council**  
**DRAFT Minutes**  
**New Brighton Community Center – New Brighton, MN**  
**21 March 2012**

**Members Present:** Bob Stine (Chair), Wayne Brandt, Greg Bernu, Alan Ek, Dave Epperly, Dale Erickson, Shaun Hamilton, Joel Koemptgen, Darla Lenz, Gene Merriam, Dave Parent, Shawn Perich, Kathleen Preece, John Rajala, Mike Trutwin, Jim Jones (alternate for Bob Lintelmann)

**Absent:** Bob Lintelmann, Mary Richards

**Staff:** Dave Zumeta, Calder Hibbard, Leslie McInenly, Rob Slesak

**Staff Absent:** Lindberg Ekola, Clarence Turner

**Guests:** Forrest Boe (DNR), Anna Dirkswager (DNR), Amber Ellering (DNR), Barb Tormoehlen (USFS S&PF)

**Chair's Remarks**

Bob Stine opened the meeting with a round of introductions. He welcomed new Council members Darla Lenz and Greg Bernu. Additional appointments are anticipated later this spring. Greg will serve on the Council's Landscape Committee; Darla will serve on the Information Management Committee.

**Public Communication**

None.

**Approval of the 25 July 2012 Minutes**

Shawn Perich moved to approve the July 2012 Council minutes. Dave Epperly seconded the motion.  
*The minutes were approved.*

**Approval of the 21 March 2012 Agenda**

Wayne Brandt moved, and Shaun Hamilton seconded, to approve the March 2012 agenda. Dave Epperly made a motion to move the seasonal pond discussion to the portion of the agenda related to guidelines for riparian management zones. The suggestion was accepted as a friendly amendment. *The agenda was approved.*

**Executive Director Remarks**

Dave Zumeta deferred his remarks to provide additional time for guideline discussions.

**Committee Reports**

*Personnel and Finance*

Bob Stine reported that the Personnel and Finance Committee has not met since the last MFRC meeting.

*Site-level Committee*

Dave Parent reported that the Site-level Committee met on March 7 to respond to the Council's January discussion regarding proposed forest management guideline revisions.

### *Landscape Committee*

Shaun Hamilton reported that the Landscape Committee met on March 20<sup>th</sup>. He distributed the regional committee update. Shaun thanked outgoing member Joel Koemptgen for his contributions to the committee and welcomed new member Greg Bernu. He noted that the committee has requested that Lindberg Ekola develop a tracking system to measure progress of committee projects.

### *Information Management Committee (IMC)*

Kathleen Preece reported that the IMC met in February at the Verso mill in Sartell. Dr. Alan Ek provided updates on the Interagency Information Cooperative and other forestry research. Tim O'Hara provided an industry update. Mike Trutwin added that one of the Verso managers spoke to the committee about the importance of a good fiber supply and the influence of energy costs on mill operations. The committee also heard about closure of the older part of the mill and the influence the closure has had on the community. Mike was optimistic that there may be opportunities to use fiber for a different end product, similar to the product anticipated from the Sappi mill in Cloquet. Calder Hibbard thanked Verso for hosting the meeting and contributing to the discussion.

### **Written Communications to the MFRC**

None.

### **Update on activities of Permanent School Fund Advisory Committee**

Gene Merriam provided an update on school trust lands. When Minnesota became a state in 1858, sections 16 and 36 of every township were granted to Minnesota from the federal government to support schools. Proceeds from any sale of or revenue from trust lands go into the permanent school fund to support schools and education of children in the state. Almost all of the land in farming regions of the state has been sold; proceeds went into the trust.

Gene reviewed the various types of land (about 2.5 million acres) collectively referred to as school trust lands, but which also include swamp trust lands (mostly peat lands), university trust land, and consolidated conservation (Con-Con) lands. Throughout its history, the state has maintained the fiduciary responsibility outlined in the state constitution. At the same time, there has been a measure of benign neglect with respect to management for school revenue generation. Historically, legislators were informed of the money available from the fund for use in appropriations for school funding. The amount from the trust fund was small relative to the total appropriation and was used to reduce the general fund appropriation. There were no questions asked about how the state was managing the lands.

In recent years there has been a national movement, particularly in western states, looking at the revenue coming from school trust lands and asking why the states were not managing for greater revenue. Utah discovered a great deal of land that was not being managed aggressively. In response, Utah created a new entity responsible for school trust land management. In Utah, much of the potential revenue is associated with oil and gas production. Utah also benefitted from parcels sold in association

with a freeway interchange. The individuals from Utah then shared their experience with education colleagues around the country.

Back in Minnesota, school trust lands were gaining attention as a result of unaddressed problems (e.g., 86,000 acres that are unavailable for management because they are in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness [BWCAW] and lands that are in state parks/scientific and natural areas...places where it is not possible to maximize revenue). Years ago, the legislature passed a statute (M.S. 127A.31) that states the goal of the Permanent School Fund is to: “secure the maximum long-term economic return from the school trust lands consistent with the fiduciary responsibilities imposed by the trust relationship established in the Minnesota Constitution, with sound natural resource conservation and management principles, and with other specific policy provided in state law.” The statute resulted in ambiguity with respect to management objectives for the land.

About five years ago, the legislature purposely called more attention to the management and development of trust lands by placing the amount of proceeds on top of the school aid formula (the amount was previously hidden within the appropriation). The annual amount transferred from the school trust for schools is about \$25 million (in comparison to billions that are currently appropriated for educational purposes). At a time of cutbacks in educational aid, any amount becomes important.

Proposals to change management of school trust lands are currently being reviewed in the Minnesota House and Senate. Representative Denise Ditrach has spearheaded a proposal in the House that would shift to a management structure, based on the Utah model, in which a different agency than DNR oversees management of the school trust lands. The basic premise is that there is an inherent conflict associated with DNR management of trust lands because generating revenue for education is not part of the Department’s mission. The problem, however, is that the school trust lands are interspersed with state lands; adding another agency for management seems impractical. Within the Permanent School Fund Advisory Committee (PSFAC), there are basically three schools of thought on the issue. The first supports Representative Ditrach’s bill to move management to a new body, the second would leave management with the DNR and put somebody other than the Commissioner in the position of oversight to increase accountability, and the third supports an operational order issued by the DNR Commissioner which established a new position within the DNR with the sole task to ensure the department is maximizing revenue opportunities. Gene added that Representative Ditrach’s legislation has moved out of committee in the House. He suggested that there may be constitutional questions associated with the bill because it would create a new board with executive-type responsibilities.

Wayne Brandt commented that the House bill would set up a new agency and transfer management of lands to a director under the authority of this newly created commission. He agreed that there are some constitutional issues. Minnesota Forest Industries does not support creation of a new agency. Wayne reviewed amendments to the Senate bill that were proposed by Senator Saxhaug. Language was also revised to reflect the DNR Commissioner’s operational order and reduce the conflict between management for revenue and management based on sound resource management principles. Wayne

added that there has been some discussion about the potential to charge people for recreational use of the lands. Up until now they have been open for public access with no such charges.

Forrest Boe offered to e-mail background information on the school trust land issue to Council members. He added that, of the \$23 million deposited to the trust fund, \$21 million of the revenue is from minerals. The net income from timber management is about 21 percent of gross revenue; Forrest suggested that any business would be pretty happy to have a 21 percent return on money...not to mention all the jobs, sales taxes, etc., produced by the industry in the state.

Dave Parent asked whether an evaluation of mineral deposits on trust lands has been conducted. Wayne responded that the Department knows where they have mineral rights but does not know where all of the minerals are. John Rajala commented that forest resources are sustainable whereas mineral extraction is a one-time shot. He asked whether mineral extraction versus timber production has been a part of the discussion. Kathleen asked about engagement of the mining community in the discussion. Wayne responded that the Iron Mining Association was supporting the Senate bill as currently constructed.

Gene stated that the 86,000 acres of trust land within the BWCAW is another fairly controversial item. There is a proposal, touted by the PSFAC, to remove the 86,000 acres from the BWCAW through a combination of land sales and exchanges. The difficulty is that some want the solution to be all land exchange and some want it to be entirely through land sales.

**Committee of the Whole: Resolutions to initially approve recommended forest management guidelines related to leave tree size, reconciliation language between biomass and earlier guidelines, and watershed condition**

Rob Slesak opened discussion on revisions to the forest management guidelines (FMGs), noting that about a third of the Site-level Committee recommendations still need to be addressed. The remaining considerations have been separated into three categories: those with minor issues, topics with no clear alternative proposed, and topics not addressed at the last meeting.

Wayne noted that MFRC staff distributed DNR comments with the mailing and suggested that, in the future, comments from all sources should be distributed.

For each recommendation, Rob reviewed the committee justification and summarized relevant discussion from the January MFRC meeting and subsequent committee discussion.

Recommendation #6 – Leave tree size (limiting the retention of sawlog-sized leave trees):

At the January meeting, language to allow consideration of economic value of leave trees was proposed. The proposal was discussed by the committee, but no consensus was reached. As a result, two alternative resolutions were suggested for Council consideration: 1) no changes related to retention of sawlog-sized leave trees or 2) approve draft language related to leave tree characteristics which explicitly recognizes economic value as a consideration when choosing leave trees.

Wayne Brandt moved to approve alternative resolution 2. John Rajala seconded the motion.

Wayne stated that the language doesn't discourage the retention of sawlog-sized trees; it only suggests that economic value may be a consideration. Dave Parent voiced support for the option. Bob Stine suggested that the language was vague, asking how one would measure consideration of economic value. Dave Parent responded that it would be an assessment of forgone revenue. Dave Epperly suggested that the landowner already has the latitude to consider economic value, given that the guidelines are voluntary. Joel Koemptgen stated that he supported the original guideline; addition of modifiers changes the whole tenor. Dale Erickson responded that he did not feel that the additional language placed extra value on economic considerations.

*The motion was called to a vote and alternative # 2 was approved, adding language explicitly recognizing economic value as an additional consideration when selecting leave trees (9 in favor, 5 opposed).*

Recommendation #13 – Biomass reconciliation language (making language consistent with FMGs):

Rob commented that the recommendation reflects discussion related to use of the terms "slash" and "fine woody debris (FWD)". While there are differing definitions, the terms are treated interchangeably in the guidelines. A number of committee members agreed that the terms are not equal; however, the committee decided to retain the terms as used and to modify the definition of slash to note that both coarse and fine woody debris are components (draft reconciliation language was distributed).

Wayne asked for clarification on the draft language and suggested that the term "slash-dependent" be included in the guideline regarding ETS species (GG 23) and that "if slash dependent" be added to the bullet related to ETS species (TH 28). Wayne Brandt moved to approve the draft language with amendments as described. Mike Trutwin seconded the motion. *The motion carried unanimously.*

Recommendation #17 – Watershed condition (general guideline to consider watershed condition when planning):

Rob noted that there was a good deal of concern expressed at the last meeting regarding the recommendation to consider watershed condition in planning. An alternative was proposed, making the consideration an informational item (versus a guideline) to be included in a planning section at the front of the general guidelines. The site-level committee unanimously supported the suggested alternative.

Dave Parent moved to approve alternative resolution #2 (to include the watershed condition consideration as an informational item). John Rajala seconded the motion. Wayne asked whether the committee considered potential improvements to habitat and water quality versus just potential detriments (as a result of management). Dave Parent responded that the discussion was focused on detrimental effects, adding that the purpose of the guidelines is to mitigate undesirable effects of timber harvest.

Dave Epperly stated that a lack of consideration regarding watershed and water quality seems fundamentally wrong. He suggested that the original recommendation (alternative motion #1), to include watershed condition in planning as a general guideline, made a stronger statement regarding the expectation that guidelines protect water quality.

Shaun Hamilton was supportive of Wayne's suggestion to encourage good practices, suggesting that the MFRC should set an example with best management practices that are not focused solely on constraints. Wayne Brandt moved to amend the alternative resolution #2 to add "or improvements" after "detriment" in the draft language. Shaun Hamilton seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued among members regarding the difficulty of enforcing this consideration if it were to be a guideline as well as concerns regarding potential impacts on certification. *The motion to approve resolution #2 was called to a vote and passed with unanimous support.*

### **Resolution to initially approve recommended invasive species forest management guidelines**

#### Recommendation #16 –creation of invasive species planning guidelines:

Rob stated that the committee developed a recommendation to create planning guidelines with a goal of preventing the spread of invasive plant species during harvesting. The scope of the guideline was specifically placed on planning. The January Council discussion highlighted support both for and against a planning guideline. The subsequent committee meeting resulted in a similar lack of consensus. As a result, the original recommendation (to adopt the new invasive species guideline) is back for Council consideration.

Dave Epperly moved to approve the Site-level Committee recommendation as written. Kathleen Preece seconded the motion. John Rajala stated that he was one of the committee members who voted in support of the planning guideline. He felt that, compared to consideration of landscape impacts largely outside the control of the site manager, doing what one can to prevent invasive species is a little bit more manageable and relatively more appropriate as a guideline (versus an informal consideration).

Dale Erickson asked whether the DNR would be prepared to reimburse him for work he will do to limit invasives. He added that berry pickers and off-highway vehicles present a greater risk than loggers for invasive species spread. Dave Epperly responded that the DNR has spent a great deal of time on their invasive species operational order. The order currently imposes quite a bit of work on DNR personnel and is incorporated into prescriptive guidelines in timber sales. The DNR feels it is important to build awareness and business practices in recognition of invasive species. There are other vectors that could be addressed but are not going to be addressed in a forest management site-level guideline.

Dale responded that incorporation of the consideration as a guideline is problematic with respect to certification. Wayne added that a fundamental difference between an invasive species guideline and all of the other guidelines is that harvesters can control 100 percent of the outcome (associated with other guidelines) in the timber harvest operation. In the certification world guidelines are no longer voluntary, they become mandatory.

Greg Bernu noted that the guidelines are voluntary whereas invasive species are a regulated subject. Minnesota has a Noxious Weed Law, established by statute. Greg suggested that, rather than a guideline, the Noxious Weed Law ought to be provided as an informational item in the guidelines book.

Joel stated that the current effort places much of the burden on the industry and loggers and suggested that the Council move in a direction that better coordinates invasive species management among all stakeholders statewide. He envisioned a study group that could coordinate the effort. Rob responded that the guideline basically asks individuals to survey the site and think about what should be done to address invasive species. He suggested that the guideline could be another informational item if a formal guideline is problematic.

Discussion regarding the burden placed on forest management activities versus other vectors of spread, as well as the effectiveness of such guidelines, ensued. In response to the discussion, Rob suggested that Minnesota could take a more comprehensive approach and adopt guidelines similar to those in Wisconsin. Council members suggested that a more comprehensive approach may be the solution. Wayne Brandt moved to table the resolution. Dale Erickson seconded the motion. *The motion to table discussion failed (6 in favor, 8 opposed).*

Bob asked the Council to discuss the more comprehensive approach. Rob reviewed development of Wisconsin's invasive species guidelines. The process was funded by the USDA Forest Service with the intent that the guidelines could be applied across the Lake States. If Minnesota takes this approach, much of the work has already been done. Greg responded that Wisconsin does not have a weed law and noted that the Wisconsin guidelines are all voluntary. He requested that an evaluation of how a more comprehensive framework might mesh with Minnesota's Noxious Weed law. Dave Parent suggested that this discussion and evaluation may be more appropriately placed under the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's (MDA's) purview. Greg felt that any information the Council can provide that will curb the spread of invasives would be appreciated by MDA. Wayne suggested that the Council develop a different solution for the guidelines manual and provide some advice about this topic more broadly. John voiced frustration that the Council is seemingly unable to develop guidelines because the guidelines become regulatory under certification. He was supportive of including the invasive species information as an additional consideration.

*Dave Epperly withdrew his motion to approve the Site-level Committee recommendation. Kathleen Preece was in agreement.*

Bob Stine suggested that the Information Management Committee take on this issue of a more comprehensive approach, including consideration of the Noxious Weed law, and come back to the Council with recommendations regarding how to proceed.

Shaun suggested that the information could still be made available in the guidelines manual in some form. Darla Lenz indicated that she would be disappointed if the Council does not move something forward in the guidelines. The issue of invasives not a new one and there are considerable impacts on

forest health. Bob reviewed the options for the revision process. The information could be: 1) included in the guidelines manual as an area of consideration; 2) included as a guideline; or 3) be excluded from this round of revisions.

John proposed that the Council add a section to the additional considerations in the general planning guidelines stating that invasive species are a major concern and recommending that practitioners review additional (listed) resources. Council members discussed language to include in the section. A final decision was made to incorporate the introductory language from the first three paragraphs (minus the third and fourth sentences in the second paragraph) of the draft language as well as the list of useful resources. John requested that references to Wisconsin's guidelines and the DNR's weed-free brochure be added to the resources list. John Rajala moved to include the revised language in the planning considerations section of the general guidelines. Dave Parent seconded the motion. Dave Epperly suggested that it made sense to also retain the pre-harvest planning suggestions (first four bulleted items).

Jim Jones stated that the Indian Affairs Council feels that the issue of invasive species must be addressed. He suggested that the Council should be educated on the research and the applicable laws, spend some time educating legislators, and acknowledge the issue now, in some format, within the guidelines manual.

Council members voiced various levels of comfort in adding additional language before the IMC review. Rob responded that, because this is an additional consideration and not a guideline, the new language does not require peer review or an economic evaluation. The language can be modified based on IMC findings.

Bob stated that the IMC has been charged with an evaluation of a more comprehensive approach. He called for a vote on the motion to include the revised language as an additional consideration in the general guidelines. *The motion to approve inclusion of the invasive species language as a consideration passed (10 in favor, 4 opposed).*

**Resolutions to approve recommended forest management guideline revisions related to riparian management zone (RMZ) widths, residual basal area (RBA), and RMZ area in relation to leave tree area**

**Recommendations #18, 19, 20 – Riparian Package:**

Rob noted that the DNR has requested that RBA be increased from 60 ft<sup>2</sup> to 75 ft<sup>2</sup> and that RMZs not be included in the calculation of recommended leave tree area. Alan Ek stated that the suggested RMZ widths suggested by the Riparian Science Technical Committee (RSTC) will likely impact a good portion of operational area. Rob responded that the RSTC did not look at the landscape area but the economic analysis concluded that the increase would affect an additional 2-3 percent of area. Alan replied that, while operations are still allowed in RMZs, there is a strong tendency to avoid the areas. He suggested there will be a resulting increase in shade-tolerant cover types in RMZs. Rob stated that the economic



analysis suggested there would be limited impact on operations at the state level but acknowledged there may be bigger impacts on individual landowners.

Wayne Brandt made a motion to approve the proposed resolution. Joel Koemptgen seconded the motion. Dave Epperly made a motion to consider the recommendations as separately. Joel Koemptgen seconded the motion. A few Council members voiced opposition to separation of the riparian package. Gene stated that the discussion raised an important parliamentary question (referring to Robert's Rules of Order versus Mason's Manual) and suggested the Council has to recognize the member's right to divide the motion. Shaun added that recommendation #21 regarding seasonal ponds is tied to RMZ retention and suggested that lumping three recommendations into a riparian package is problematic.

Jim commented on the increased likelihood of finding burial sites within RMZs. While public lands must follow state and federal laws relating to evaluation of potential burial sites, private lands do not have the same restrictions (other than the Private Cemeteries Act). Jim asked whether burial sites were considered by the Site-level Committee. Rob responded that the issue was not evaluated.

Bob recognized the motion to divide the original motion and called for a vote. *The motion to divide passed (8 in favor, 6 opposed)*. Wayne withdrew his original motion.

Recommendation #18 to adopt RSTC-recommended RMZ widths:

Greg Bernu moved to approve the RSTC-recommended RMZ widths. Alan Ek seconded the motion.

Greg stated that the Minnesota Association of Land Commissioners does not support any change to the guidelines. This is based upon the group's extensive field experience in a various states. Dale was also in support of the original RMZ width. John suggested that the combined recommendations in the riparian package would likely be cost-prohibitive.

Bob called for a vote on the motion. *The motion to adopt recommendation #18 passed (12 in favor, 2 opposed)*.

Recommendation #19 to adopt an RBA of 60ft<sup>2</sup> in RMZs:

John Rajala moved to approve recommendation #19. Alan Ek seconded the motion.

Greg suggested that the metric should be changed from residual basal area to stems per acre. Council members discussed the merits of shifting to alternative metrics but acknowledged that the relationships are not well established. Dave Epperly suggested that, until better metrics are established, the Council should stick with the original guideline recommendation (75 ft<sup>2</sup> RBA). John noted that RMZs are not being managed and suggested that the Council ought to include language that provides examples of when it would be appropriate to deviate from the guideline for silvicultural purposes.

Bob called for a vote. *The motion was approved (11 in favor, 3 opposed)*.

Recommendation #20 motion to allow RMZ area to count towards recommended leave tree area:

Dale Erickson moved to approve recommendation #20. Greg Bernu seconded the motion. Shaun Hamilton suggested that the RMZ should not count toward the leave tree requirement given the

approved reduction in basal area required in RMZs and the decision not to require leave trees around seasonal ponds. Dale noted that, in practice, RMZs are rarely harvested. Greg stated that the land commissioners support inclusion of the RMZ area in the quantification of leave tree area. Wayne indicated that Minnesota Forest Industries and Minnesota Timber Producers Association are also in support. Dave Epperly suggested that the language should reflect the RSTC intent that scattered, rather than clumped, leave trees are preferred. Bob called for a vote on the motion. *The motion to allow RMZ area to count toward recommended leave tree area passed (11 in favor, 3 opposed).*

#### **Resolutions to approve the recommended forest management guideline harvest size minimum for leave tree retention**

Rob provided background on the harvest size minimum discussion, noting that the Site-level Committee did not reach consensus on the recommendation (votes were evenly split for and against the recommendation). As a result, the committee has provided two alternative recommendations for consideration: 1) do nothing or 2) establish a 20-acre harvest size minimum.

Rob reported that the committee discussed the benefits and effectiveness of leave trees. Generally, benefits of leave trees have been identified through research but often at levels of retention greater than those recommended by the Council. Within the existing guidelines, the de facto minimum for leave tree area is five acres (the minimum clump size). Certification standards do not define a harvest size minimum, but some regulatory states such as California, Washington and Oregon do define a minimum harvest size and will not allow some other harvests within a certain distance. Economic factors associated with leave tree retention include loss of value through forgone stumpage and leave tree blowdown. He noted that the DNR is concerned that a change in the guidelines could result in more small harvests and more frequent harvests.

Dave Epperly moved to approve the alternative #1, to not create a harvest size minimum for retention of leave trees. Joel Koemptgen seconded the motion.

Dale suggested that the concern regarding a shift to smaller cuts did not make economic sense and noted that the only place that such a shift might be noticeable would be in aspen. Shaun asked if there were regions of the state in which the creation of a harvest size minimum for leave tree retention would have greater impact. Dale stated that larger harvests were more likely in the far north and the northwestern portion of the state. Greg agreed, noting that ownership patterns in the northeast result in smaller harvests. Further discussion regarding the cost of smaller harvests and the practicality of retention on small sites ensued.

Bob called for a vote on the motion to preserve the status quo (no harvest size minimum). *The motion passed (8 in favor, 6 opposed).*

#### **Resolution to approve the recommendation to not change seasonal pond guidelines**

Wayne Brandt moved to approve the resolution to preserve the original seasonal pond guidelines. Shaun Hamilton seconded the motion.

Rob commented that, although the committee recognizes that seasonal ponds are incredibly important, the recommendation was made to not add leave tree retention to the seasonal pond guidelines. This decision was made because the committee felt there would be little landscape-level impact as a result of such a guideline. During the January MFRC meeting, the recommendation received general support with the exception of concern from the DNR that there may be potential compounding effects as a result of other RMZ and leave tree guidelines.

Dave Parent noted that a conclusion from the RSTC report indicated that the recovery period for disturbed ponds occurs within 10 years. Rob replied that the recovery period reported in the report was based upon one study; he suggested there is a real need for additional research on seasonal ponds.

Bob called for a vote on the motion to preserve the status quo in the seasonal pond guidelines. *The motion passed (13 in favor, none opposed).*

### **Evaluation of peer review, public review and economic analysis protocols**

Rob reviewed plans for the peer and public review. There will be two types of peer review (scientific and practitioner). He reviewed the criteria to be used in selecting peer reviewers, including demonstrated expertise and an ability to apply knowledge to Minnesota sites. Individuals involved in the current revision process (including RSTC members) will not be selected as peer reviewers. Rob requested nominations from Council members. He will also work with Alan Ek to generate a list of potential peer reviewers.

The review format will be similar to that used in 2005. There will be an evaluation form for each topic; peer reviewers will be evaluating only the recommended changes to the guidelines (in the context of the entire set of practices). Evaluation criteria will include practicality, whether the change is science-based, effectiveness, flexibility, understandability, and overall rating. The public process will be similar and concurrent. The review period will last four to six weeks.

An economic analysis will be conducted for guidelines related to allowable infrastructure and the counting of RMZ as leave tree area. Three questions were considered in the determination of whether an economic analysis will be conducted for guideline changes: 1) if the change is more than a slight modification, 2) if the change is likely to cause adverse economic effects, or 3) if both costs and benefits can be quantified in a defensible way. The analysis will be conducted by staff but an ad hoc committee of economists will provide guidance.

Joel asked whether an attempt will ever be made to quantify nonmarket ecological values. Rob responded that there are disciplines actively working on this issue. At this point, if he were to try to develop a value it would not be defensible. Dave Zumeta said that the Council could seek funding to support this type of research. Wayne reminded Council members that the guidelines were developed in the context of an anticipated harvest over five million cords. In Minnesota, the current harvest is roughly half that amount. Rob anticipated he would be able to report outcomes of the review by the July or September Council meeting. Dave Zumeta asked Rob to communicate the results of this meeting to the RSTC members.

### **Public Communications to the MFRC**

Barb Tormoehlen reminded Council members of the competitive allocation funding available from the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry branch. She also warned members of a scam using USDA letterhead that has targeted Forest Service contractors.

### **Member Communications**

Dave Epperly stated that this will likely be his last Council meeting. He commented that it has been a wonderful professional experience.

Joel Koemptgen noted that this is also likely his last meeting. He stated that, without question, he feels he has learned a lot more than he has contributed. He added that, in the four years he has been a member, the DNR and the legislature have consistently decreased support while at the same time the Council and staff continues to deliver more each year.

Wayne made a motion to formally thank Dave and Joel for their contributions. *The motion was seconded and approved.*

Wayne provided an update on the Sappi pulp mill project in Cloquet. He noted that the plan to produce a more refined form of pulp does not mean that Sappi is getting out of the paper making business. He added that it is very encouraging to have a multi-national corporation spend \$170+ million in Minnesota. Wayne also stated that there is a proposal in the Senate omnibus bill that would direct the Council to look at all private forestry programs and assess whether there may be a more holistic approach than the one currently in use. Sponsors are currently looking for funding so that the proposal does not become an unfunded mandate. Kathleen Preece mentioned that Gary Erickson will be at the April 19 Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership meeting to discuss the Sappi initiative.

Dave Zumeta thanked Jim Jones for participating on Bob Lintelmann's behalf. He also thanked Joel and Dave Epperly for their participation and service on the Council.

Dale Erickson moved, and Dave Parent seconded adjournment. *The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.*